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DFEH Settlement Results in Reasonable Accommodation Policies for Tens of Thousands of Low-Income Residents of Los Angeles

Tenant with Disabilities Receives \$7,500 for Denial of Reasonable Accommodation

Sacramento – The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has reached settlements with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) and the Single Room Occupancy Housing Corporation (SRO) in a housing disability case involving a tenant with disabilities who alleged he was denied reasonable accommodation.

The complainant filed a complaint on February 14, 2017 with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), which referred the case to DFEH for investigation pursuant to the memorandum of understanding between the two agencies. The complainant was a tenant at a supportive housing facility known as the Renato Apartments owned by SRO, which is a non-profit provider of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing for thousands of formerly homeless and low-income men and women in Los Angeles. The tenant alleged that he has mobility restrictions related to severe hip arthritis, and made at least seven requests over two years to move to vacant first-floor units as a reasonable accommodation. As a section 8 voucher holder, he sought and received approval for the move from HACLA, one of the nation's largest public housing authorities that provides housing to tens of thousands of LA residents. However, he alleged that SRO did not accommodate his requests and HACLA was dismissive of his complaints, and he ultimately moved from the property.

DFEH found merit in the allegations and referring the case to mandatory mediation, where the case was resolved.

“All housing providers are subject to fair housing laws and must provide reasonable accommodations to tenants with disabilities,” said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. “This includes non-profit organizations and supportive and transitional housing providers.”

As part of the settlement, SRO will pay the tenant \$7,500 in damages. In addition, both SRO and HACLA will provide fair housing training to employees and develop reasonable accommodation policies. For three years, SRO will provide compliance reports to the DFEH about the outcomes of reasonable accommodation requests.

Staff Counsel Denise Levey represented DFEH in this proceeding.

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The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit the DFEH's web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

